

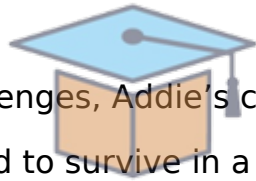
# Chapter III

Chapter III begins on a hot, sweltering summer day in Paris, 1714, where the city is a whirlwind of life, both dazzling and divisive. The once-glorious city teeters between wealth and squalor, a place where the promise of luxury exists side by side with the harshness of poverty. Amidst this stark contrast, Adeline LaRue, or Addie, finds herself navigating the difficult realities of survival, wishing for the elegant Paris that would eventually emerge with Haussmann's grand renovations. With only a handful of copper sols to her name, she faces the grueling task of finding shelter for the night—a task that proves frustrating and humiliating as the city's indifferent gaze falls upon her.

Addie's plight deepens as she moves from one lodging house to another, rejected each time for being too poor, too female, or simply too alone to be of any value to those in charge. After numerous failed attempts, she is grudgingly offered a dingy room by an older woman, but the cost is steep: three sols, a small sum, but still a burden for Addie. When she awakens the next morning, however, the woman shows no recognition of her presence, and in a cruel twist, Addie is thrown out, her presence as fleeting and forgotten as her payment. Stripped of even the meager belongings she had, she is left with only a broken wooden bird and the cold cloak of invisibility granted by her fateful deal with the dark force known as Luc.

Cast adrift, Addie finds herself in a Paris that is both vibrant and merciless, where survival is a constant battle. The city, while alive with movement and color, offers no refuge to someone like her—someone who lives on the edges, unnoticed and unremembered. In an attempt to procure some basic sustenance, Addie resorts to theft, her first clumsy attempt only yielding a piece of stale bread and a reminder of her vulnerability. This incident, a simple reminder of her station in life, also highlights the paradox of her existence: despite her immortality, she remains weak to the physical tolls of life—hunger, fatigue, and the relentless need for survival.

With nowhere else to turn, Addie seeks solace in a church, hoping for a semblance of peace or even recognition in a place meant to be a sanctuary for all. Yet, the church offers her nothing but further rejection, reinforcing her curse of invisibility even in sacred spaces. Desperation drives her to the docks, where a grim encounter forces her to trade her last bit of innocence for a few cold coins, marking the lowest point in her journey so far. The transaction, a harsh reminder of her reality, also deepens the isolation she feels, a stark symbol of her life defined by the absence of lasting connections.



Summary

Despite these challenges, Addie's character begins to evolve. Her struggles, born from an unrelenting need to survive in a city that offers little empathy, force her to tap into her resilience. With each theft, each desperate act, she builds a new layer of determination, slowly learning to adapt to the city's unforgiving rhythm. Through these moments of quiet defiance, she refuses to let herself be consumed by the loneliness imposed by the curse, her refusal to disappear becoming a quiet act of rebellion.

This chapter paints a portrait of a woman, lost in a sprawling city, striving not just to survive but to assert her existence in the face of overwhelming odds. Paris, in its early 18th-century splendor and decay, becomes the backdrop for Addie's evolution, her struggle to adapt mirroring the city's own metamorphosis over time. As she carves out a fragile existence amidst the hustle and decay, the narrative encapsulates a story of survival, defiance, and the quest for meaning in a world that forgets her every step. Addie's journey is marked by moments of failure and triumph, each step forward a testament to her unyielding will to live fully, even in the shadows.